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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**GEORGIA WOMAN SENTENCED IN
DEATH OF U.S. PARK POLICE OFFICER**

GREENBELT, Maryland. Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced that Jovada Welch, age 20, of Rome, Georgia, who pled guilty to involuntary manslaughter for killing a U. S. Park Police officer while driving drunk, was sentenced today by U.S. District Court Judge Deborah K. Chasanow to 5 years incarceration followed by 3 years of supervised release.

According to the plea agreement provided to the court, Welch killed Officer Hakim Farthing last August 10 when she struck the officer as he was directing traffic away from an earlier fatal collision on the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. Her blood-alcohol level was .10.

In addition to drinking alcohol despite being underage, Welch was speeding down the dark highway without her eyeglasses, which she is required to wear when driving. When she struck the officer, his body shattered her windshield and then skidded across the highway approximately 160 feet. Welch continued to drive nearly half a mile until her disabled car came to a stop.

Farthing, who had been on the police department for almost two years, died on the scene.

In imposing the five-year sentence, Judge Chasanow departed upward from the standard federal guideline sentence for involuntary manslaughter.

The investigation was conducted by the U.S. Park Police and prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Hollis Raphael Weisman and David I. Salem.